

REMARKS

The applicant has further amended the claims. Specifically, the applicant has added the word “substantially” before the elements “elastic support”, “elastic ribs” and “elastic connection” in claims 1 and 8 (and has included this word in new claim 30) to more clearly define the features of the present invention over the cited prior art.

In addition, the applicant has cancelled claim 3 to overcome the objections to the drawings. The applicant has deleted claims 10-20 and added new claims 21-31. New claim 29 has been drafted to overcome the 112 rejection of claim 17.

Applicant believes all amendments and all limitations of the new claims are fully supported throughout the disclosure of the description. No new matter has been introduced.

The 102 Rejection

Claim 8 was rejected as anticipated by Widdrington.

The 103 Rejections

Claims 1, 3 and 5-7 were rejected as unpatentable over Widdrington in view of Kiernan and further in view of CN 99222132.3.

Claims 9-13 were rejected as unpatentable over Widdrington in view of CN 99222132.3.

Claims 14 and 15 were rejected as unpatentable over Widdrington in view of CN 99222132.3 and further in view of Kiernan.

Argument

As the applicant explained in the previous response, both the frame 11 in Widdrington and the coupling arm 4 in CN99222132.3 are substantially rigid. Therefore, the feature “substantially elastic support” as defined in independent claims 1, 8 and 30 is not disclosed in either Widdrington or CN99222132.3. The feature “substantially elastic support” is also absent from Kiernan.

Therefore, the applicant believes that the invention as defined in independent claim 8 is novel over Widdrington. Furthermore, the invention as claimed in independent claim 1 is

nonobvious over the hypothetical combination of Widdrington, Kiernan and CN99222132.3. Independent claim 30 (which replaces claim 18) is patentable over Widdrington and CN99222132.3. Therefore, independent claims 1, 8 and 30 are patentable. At least for the same reasons, all the dependent claims 5-7, 9-18 and 31 are also patentable. It is to be noted that claim 9 has been amended to include the word "substantially" to modify both the elastic support (5) and the plurality of elastic ribs (53).

Conclusion

In conclusion, all of the claims remaining in this application should now be seen to be in condition for allowance. A prompt notice to that effect is respectfully solicited. If there are any remaining questions, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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